

## USDA Rural Development: Investing in Maine's Energy Future

**USDA Rural Development offers a wide variety of programs in the form of loans, grants, and guarantees geared toward energy efficiency. Programs are available for business, housing, and community facilities.**

**Businesses and agricultural producers** can utilize programs such as the Renewable Energy for Rural America Program (known as REAP). Through this program agricultural producers and small businesses may receive funds to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy-efficient improvements. Examples of renewable energy projects are biomass, anaerobic digesters, geothermal, hydrogen, wind, hydroelectric, and solar. Other programs that may be useful are the Value-Added Grant Program, which can be used for working capital or marketing value-added agricultural products and farm-based renewable energy, and the Biomass Research and Development Program, which can be used for eligible entities to carry out research and development as well as demonstration of biofuels and bio-based products and the methods, practices, and technologies for their production.

**Homeowners** can utilize a Rural Development Repair and Rehabilitation (Section 504) Loan or Grant to increase their home's energy efficiency. Eligible uses include updating or purchasing a new central heating system, replacing or adding insulation, replacing drafty or broken doors and windows, and other essential repairs. The Single-Family Direct (Section 502) Loan can be used to purchase or construct a home and include energy efficient upgrades, such as a new furnace. Through the Home Energy Advantage Program, incentives may be provided for persons seeking to purchase an energy-efficient home.

Rural Development Programs may also be used by eligible entities for increasing energy-efficiency at multi-family apartments to make essential repairs to the apartment building(s) or to install energy-efficient heating system(s).

**Communities and Community Facilities** can utilize programs for energy efficiency. Hospitals, schools, and municipalities may access the Community Facilities Programs to convert to biomass. Through the Water and Waste Programs, municipalities and quasi-municipalities can make energy-efficient system upgrades of water and waste facilities. Through the Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative, grants may be available for rural communities to substantially increase their energy self-sufficiency.

For more information on any of Rural Development's energy programs, call **1-800-352-8963 ext 161**, email [rdhelps@me.usda.gov](mailto:rdhelps@me.usda.gov), or visit our website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me/>.



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